

# DAILY BULLETIN

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## UNITED STATES SAYS U.N. TORTURE REPORT IGNORED CRUCIAL DATA

U.N. committee overstepped its authority calling  
for Guantanamo closure

Washington – The United States says a U.N. anti-tor-  
ture report apparently ignored hundreds of pages of  
documents submitted by U.S. officials, made numerous  
errors and overstepped its authority by recommending  
the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.

“We are disappointed, despite our extensive work to  
provide materials to them, that they did not take ad-  
vantage of that and that they ignored a number of the  
materials that we gave to them,” John Bellinger, legal  
adviser to the State Department, told reporters May 19.

Bellinger led a team of more than two-dozen senior  
U.S. officials to Geneva, Switzerland, May 5-8, to  
present oral and written reports to the U.N. Commit-  
tee Against Torture. The exhaustive U.S. presentation  
included more than 200 pages of written answers to  
questions that centered on the conduct of U.S. de-  
tention operations in military operations around the  
world.

As a party to the U.N. Convention Against Torture, the  
United States is required to present a report to the U.N.  
Committee every four years describing its compliance  
with the convention, and the written report was filed  
on schedule a year ago, with a follow-up oral presenta-  
tion earlier in May in Geneva.

The U.N. committee formally released its findings May 19. In the report, the committee “welcomed” the U.S. statement “that all officials, from all government agencies, including its contractors, were prohibited from engaging in cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

However, the committee also said it was “concerned by allegations” that the United States “had established secret detention facilities.” The committee also recommended that the United States “cease to detain any person at Guantanamo Bay” and that the United States close the detention facility in Cuba while ensuring that no detainees are released to a country where they would be tortured.

The U.N. committee appeared to have ignored or overlooked much of the written material he submitted, Bellinger told reporters. He also said the committee overstepped its mandate by recommending the closure of Guantanamo.

Bellinger said it was “not a particularly auspicious time for the United States to have to be filing a periodic report before the Convention Against Torture, in the aftermath of Abu Ghraib,” the prison where U.S. troops illegally abused prisoners in 2003 and 2004.

“But we take our obligations seriously, and we did not shy away from going to Geneva,” Bellinger said. In fact, the United States filed the most comprehensive report ever given to the U.N. committee by any government.

“We filed extensive material. We had a good dialogue with the committee, answered their questions as fully as we could,” Bellinger said. “And I think we got a good deal of credit from them at the time for engaging in ... extensive and candid dialogue with them.”

The U.N. report does commend the United States for its “exhaustive written responses” and candid dialogue, Bellinger said. The U.N. report, in fact, acknowledges that after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States “is in a complex legal and political environment,” Bellinger said.

“On the downside of the ledger, we are disappointed that despite the fact that the committee acknowledges the extensive materials that we gave to them, that they don’t seem to have relied on information that we gave to them in preparing their report,” he said.

“In many ways, it appears that the report was written without the benefit of the materials, the information that we gave them, and, in fact, they seem to have ignored a good deal of the information that we did give to them,” Bellinger said.

This resulted in “numerous errors of fact, just simply things that they’ve got wrong about what the U.S. law or practice is,” he said.

“The committee also seems to have stretched in a number of areas to address issues that are well outside its mandate and outside the scope of the Convention Against Torture,” Bellinger said. “We know these issues are out there. These are issues that you’ve all heard before. But we did not think that it’s in the scope of this particular committee to go try to address every issue relating to detainees or Guantanamo and try to somehow squeeze it into the mandate of the Convention Against Torture.”

Still, Bellinger emphasized that the United States intends to continue complying with the Convention Against Torture.

“They’ve asked us to get back in a year to them with answers on some questions, and I’m sure that we will be getting back to them in a year,” Bellinger said. “We do take our obligations seriously under the Convention Against Torture. We think that we are in compliance with our obligations.”

Bellinger said he wanted to acknowledge “that there were very serious incidents of abuse. We’ve all seen Abu Ghraib. There have been other -- numerous other allegations. There have been other incidents.” But, he stressed, these cases have been investigated, and people have been held accountable for wrongdoing.

“We are endeavoring hard to address all of these issues of abuse,” he said. “The Defense Department, our intelligence agencies have adopted new procedures, new training. We have the McCain amendment. So we have new laws, new procedures, more training in place, and people are being held accountable for the abuses that did happen in the past.”

Responding to a reporter’s question, Bellinger said the United States has no intention of withdrawing from the U.N. anti-torture treaty.

“We certainly would not consider pulling out of the Convention Against Torture,” he said. However, the report

“does raise questions about -- When we show up before the committee, prepare an enormous amount of material for them, and they ignore it -- whether that has, in fact, been a productive use of our time.”

The materials the United States presented to the U.N. Committee Against Torture are available on the Web site of the U. S. Diplomatic Mission to the United Nations in Geneva:  
<http://geneva.usmission.gov/>

For more information, see Detainee Issues  
[http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human\\_rights/detainees.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/detainees.html)

## U.S. MILITARY HUMANITARIAN AID PROVIDES LONG-TERM BENEFITS

Rumsfeld says U.S. forces are helping in Djibouti, Asia and elsewhere

By Jacquelyn S. Porth  
 Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld says U.S. military forces are helping people every day in all parts of the world in unconventional ways: building hospitals, digging water wells and administering medical aid to those in need.

Many American soldiers, who once thought they would see combat, are not using their weapons, Rumsfeld said, but are building new structures in places like Djibouti and delivering urgent medical care where there is none. Rumsfeld told Defense Department employees May 19 that tremendous advantages accrue from U.S. humanitarian assistance that the military extends not only in Africa and the Middle East, but also in Asia and the Pacific.

Even though the primary focus of U.S. military forces has to be on preparation and readiness for conventional warfare, Rumsfeld said there is no reason why that same force “ought not to be used from time to time” for other missions such as hurricane relief in the Western Hemisphere or the provision of emergency supplies, such as food or blankets, to areas of the world that suffer a natural disaster.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Peter Pace, appearing with the secretary, said the best qualities of the

United States are demonstrated when U.S. military forces save lives and property as they did in 2005 by providing tsunami relief to Indonesia and earthquake aid to Pakistan.

Offering much-needed humanitarian assistance allows the military to demonstrate its passion, concern and “willingness to reach out and help others,” Pace said, adding, “That’s a great thing for our armed forces to do.”

Carrying out humanitarian assistance, whether rebuilding Afghanistan or providing medical supplies to Honduras, Pace said, promotes understanding and goodwill. “It is well worth the investment of time and energy to carry out these good works,” he added.

Pace and Rumsfeld made their comments during a Defense Department Town Hall meeting at the Pentagon. They periodically meet with department employees to listen to their concerns and answer questions about current topics.

## PATROLLING BORDERS

One questioner asked about the role U.S. Army National Guard and Reserve forces would play in patrolling the border between the United States and Mexico. In reply, Rumsfeld said there is much misinformation circulating about the plan to use these forces temporarily to back up the existing Border Patrol.

He said 6,000 members of the Guard and Reserves would be deployed in 2006, and only 3,000 in 2007, to do missions they normally would practice as part of their annual training. The secretary said they might be assigned to work on construction projects or to guide unmanned aerial vehicles, for example, but “they’re not going to be out with a gun standing on the border shooting at people who are trying to come across the border.”

Rumsfeld said these forces also might help set up fencing along the border. “We may be doing some fencing in the Yuma Range or the Barry Goldwater Range,” he said, “where a number of people trying to get into our country have died because of difficulties they’ve had getting in.” The two ranges, located in southwest Arizona and southeastern California, are high-hazard training and weapons testing areas for the U.S. Air Force and Marine Corps.

For more information about U.S. policy, see International Security:  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/index.html>

For more information about U.S. humanitarian aid, see Foreign Policy Agenda:  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/1104/ijpe/ijpe1104.htm>

#### STATE'S ZOELICK URGES GLOBAL SUPPORT FOR DARFUR PEACE ACCORD

U.N. peacekeeping mission, food deliveries vital to sustain agreement

Washington -- The international community must continue to take immediate actions on a number of peacekeeping, political, and humanitarian fronts to sustain the Darfur Peace Accord, signed in Abuja, Nigeria, on May 5, according to Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick.

Zoellick spoke in The Hague, the Netherlands, on May 18 before attending the World Economic Summit on the Middle East in Egypt.

"This is a very critical time to have the follow-up actions build on the Abuja Peace Accord," Zoellick said. He listed several urgent tasks, among them integrating the African Union forces into a strengthened U.N. peacekeeping mission, expediting shipments of food and humanitarian aid, encouraging splinter rebel groups to sign the peace agreement, and keeping "focus and attention on the government of Khartoum, particularly to rein in the Jingawit."

Zoellick, describing the past week as useful in maintaining the momentum of the peace accord, cited passage of a U.N. Security Council resolution on peacekeeping, the commitment of additional food aid from the United States and Canada, and the lifting of travel restrictions on nongovernmental organizations by the Sudanese government.

"The government notified all the Arab tribes in the region that any breach of peace from Arab militias would be met with a very strong response," he said.

"The peace accord is an opening," Zoellick said. "It's an opportunity, but we have to complement it with active support on the security side, the economic side, the political side."

He paid tribute to the level of international cooperation on the Darfur issues, which he called "extraordinary," pointing to the efforts of the EU, Canada, African Union, and the Arab League. Zoellick also thanked the Netherlands for its offer to host a conference on reconstruction and development in Darfur, which he said might take place in the fall.

For more information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency:  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>

#### STATE'S ZOELICK SEES IMPORTANT CHANGES UNDER WAY IN MIDEAST

Zoellick urges Arab countries to stay committed to economic, political reforms

By David Shelby  
 Washington File Staff Writer

Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt -- The Middle East is undergoing an important era of change, and the United States will continue supporting those in the region who champion political and economic reforms, according to Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick.

"I believe people will look back five years from now, and they'll see the changes were much greater than they might have expected, because I think that there are actually big things afoot here," he told an audience at the World Economic Forum on the Middle East in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt May 21.

He said by and large Arab governments have failed to meet the needs of their people in the past. "The political systems following the Ottoman Empire, whether they be dynasties, whether they be pan-Arabism, Arab nationalism, Arab socialism, have not really developed the goods for people. And the U.N. Arab Human Development Report said it pretty bluntly. It said there's a black hole."

Zoellick blamed this failure to provide political and economic opportunities to the citizens of the Arab world for the rise of political Islam as a force of opposition to the established order.

## THE FREEDOM AGENDA

He said some of the tension in the Middle East today can also be attributed to the United States' advancement of the freedom agenda and its support for those in the region who are pushing for reforms against the resistance of status quo forces.

Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa, speaking at the same panel discussion, said the people of the region have recognized the need for change and are moving ahead with social, political and economic reforms.

"It is my opinion that we have started. We already agreed that reform and modernization must be the first thing on our agenda of recreating, rebuilding, reactivating our societies," he said. "It will not be easy. But in the final analysis, we have to enter the 21st century. We cannot live in the 20th century."

He pointed to the Arab League's May 2004 Tunis Declaration as an example of how the Arab world is taking the cause of reform to heart. That report called for improvements in democratization, women's rights, civil society empowerment, human rights, education, economic opportunities and the culture of knowledge.

## PRINCIPLES VS. ACTIONS

Zoellick praised the principles of the report but challenged the Arab world to translate those words into concrete actions.

Moussa defended a cautious pace of reform in the region, saying it has a fragile security situation. He said further progress depends upon stability.

But Zoellick dismissed that point, saying, "I always get a little cautious when people overemphasize stability, because it suggests rigidity in the old order as opposed to trying to promote change."

"I hope that the foreign policy agenda does not become the excuse for delayed reform," he said.

Zoellick said the argument is particularly weak when it comes to economic reform. He noted that several countries in East Asia have undertaken important economic reforms despite political tensions in the region. (See East Asia and the Pacific.)

The deputy secretary said there is an important struggle

taking place in the Middle East for the soul of Islam. He said there are those who would take Islam back to the medieval caliphates while others propose a modern interpretation consistent with democratic principles. He said the United States could help empower the voices of modernization, but ultimately "it's for the people of this region to determine what future they want."

## PERCEPTIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Zoellick said the decisions and actions of the people in the region will have an impact on how the Middle East is perceived abroad. While deploring the collapse of the Dubai Ports World deal to assume management of several U.S. ports, he said it is indicative of how the American people fail to understand much of what they see in the region, such as the outbreak of deadly violence following the publication of offensive cartoons in a Danish newspaper.

"Was that the best way to respond?" he asked.

"If you want to win the support of the American people, not just the government, it's going to require the average person, or the business person, or the leaders in the community, to stand up about what they believe in," he said.

More than 1,200 government, business and civil society leaders are gathered in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm El-Sheikh for the three-day World Economic Forum looking at political and economic developments in the Middle East.

For ongoing coverage of the forum and related issues, see World Economic Forum in Egypt:  
[http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/world\\_economic\\_forum.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/world_economic_forum.html)

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